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Fifty-ninth session
Item 57 (n) of the provisional agenda*
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations: cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 3 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the letter dated 3 September 2004 from Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the illegal activities carried out by Armenia in the occupied territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan, following the armed aggression and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Armenia against Azerbaijan and its population, in blatant violation of international law and international humanitarian law (see annex).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be distributed urgently as a document of the General Assembly, under item 57 (n) of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yashar **Aliyev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/59/150.

04-50062 (E) 080904

Annex to the identical letters dated 3 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In my letter of 10 July 2004 regarding the intention of the Armenian separatist regime established by the Republic of Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan to hold "elections" to the "local self-governance bodies" (S/2004/562, annex), I underlined the attempts of Armenia to consolidate the results of its blatant aggression against Azerbaijan. Today, I would like to draw your attention to other illegal actions carried out by Armenia in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

By maintaining its illegal occupation of the Azerbaijani territories, Armenia seeks to impose on Azerbaijan a forceful solution of the conflict on the basis of fait accompli and furthermore, ignoring and disrespecting the will of the international community with a sense of impunity, tries to annex part of the territory of Azerbaijan in violation of Armenia's own international commitments. To this end, Armenia has started to solidify the consequences of the unprecedented mass-scale ethnic cleansing campaign and to settle the Armenian population in the occupied Azerbaijani territories, thus creating a new demographic situation. I believe that the dangerous and potentially explosive impact of establishing these illegal settlements is self-evident.

Below are some facts documented by Armenian sources, which testify both that the settlements are being established and that this is being done in an organized manner:

(a) On 10 September 2001, the Armenian news agency Asbarez Online released the following information:

> "Officials in Yerevan, meanwhile, say that more than one thousand families from Armenia have taken up residence in Karabakh since 1994. Part of the settlers resides in the Armenian-controlled Lachin district in Azerbaijan. According to the Armenian Government's Department of Migration and Refugees, as many as 100,000 Armenian families are ready to move to Karabakh";

(b) According to the information provided by the Armenian news agencies Armenpress and Noyan Topan dated 10 January 2002:

> "[Armenia's] government-affiliated migration and refugee commission said that close to 700 families asked for permanent residency in Nagorno Karabakh between October 2000 and January 1, 2002. The biggest portion, 547 families, were urban residents of Armenia. Approximately 310 families were from Yerevan. The department said it helped settle 70 families or 370 people in Nagorno Karabakh in the last two years";

(c) The "Chief of the Department for Refugees and Migrants" of the so-called "Nagorno-Karabakh Republic", Serj Amirhanian, informed the ARKA and NKR news agencies that since January 2004 82 families from Armenia and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States had moved into the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Armenia also falsifies the history and defaces the cultural and architectural heritage of the city of Shusha in the Nagorno-Karabakh region — a historical Azerbaijani city the overwhelming majority of the population of which were Azerbaijani before the Armenian occupation in May 1992. To ensure the implementation of this distortion of reality, Armenia, with the assistance of the Armenian diaspora, has established the so-called "Shusha" fund.

Armenia brings new settlers in and changes the demographic situation not only of the Nagorno-Karabakh region, but also of other occupied regions of Azerbaijan around Nagorno-Karabakh. The region of Lachin, under Armenian occupation since 1992, has now about 13,000 residents who were resettled there by the Government of Armenia. Moreover, Armenia applies an Armenian name, "Berdzor", to the Azerbaijani city of Lachin. This outrageous practice of historical falsifications has a long history — Armenia has always tried to "armenianize" native names of historical Azerbaijani places, adding a cultural "insult" to the "injury" of ethnic cleansing.

The Security Council, in paragraph 3 of its resolution 822 (1993) and paragraph 11 of its resolution 853 (1993), reaffirmed that "all parties are bound to comply with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law". Thus, the provisions of main legal instruments of international humanitarian law, inter alia, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the First Additional Protocol, apply to Armenia, which is a party to all four Geneva Conventions and two Additional Protocols. As you also know, those provisions, namely, article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and article 85, paragraphs 4 and 5, of the First Additional Protocol prohibit deportation or transfer of parts of a civilian population by an occupying power into the territory it occupies.

All the aforementioned illegal actions make evident once more the dangerous policy pursued by Armenia to alter the situation in the region and to prevent the return of the Azerbaijani population to their homes with a view to undermining the process of settlement of the conflict.

It is obvious that, without strong pressure on the part of the international community to hold Armenia responsible, it will not change its aggressive and destructive stance. The ongoing illegal settlement, so-called elections, based on exclusively mono-ethnic constituencies, infrastructural changes and other actions of the Armenian side on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan should be strongly and unequivocally condemned by the international community in the light of the already established precedent of considering and condemning similar illegal practices in occupied territories. Otherwise, the inaction of those who are responsible for the restoration and maintenance of peace and international security and for the mediation of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan will further aggravate the situation, thus having a negatively impact, and ultimately undermining, the process of peaceful settlement of the conflict.

Should the victim and the aggressor, those who adhere to international law and those who violate it, be treated on an equal footing, we could hardly expect just and fair settlement of the conflict.

Azerbaijan expects that these serious concerns will receive your adequate reaction and prompt your strong action to remove the obstacles derailing the already fragile negotiation process. Only an attitude based on full and unequivocal respect

for the letter and spirit of international law may open up ways of reaching a just, complete and comprehensive settlement of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

(*Signed*) Elmar **Mammadyarov**

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Fifty-ninth session
Item 150 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization

Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report has been submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 58/80 of 9 December 2003. It highlights the measures for further improvement of the procedures and working methods of the Security Council and its sanctions committees related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions; reviews the capacity and modalities within the Secretariat for implementing the intergovernmental mandates and for addressing the main findings, including recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (A/53/312, chap. IV); and also reviews recent developments related to the role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the area of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions.

* A/59/150.

** The present report was submitted after the established deadline in order to take into account the outcomes of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of 2004.

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I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution 58/80 of 9 December 2003, entitled "Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions". In that resolution, the Assembly, inter alia:

(a) Renewed its invitation to the Security Council to consider the establishment of further mechanisms or procedures, as appropriate, for consultations as early as possible under Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations with third States that were or might be confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Council under Chapter VII of the Charter, with regard to a solution of those problems, including appropriate ways and means for increasing the effectiveness of its methods and procedures applied in the consideration of requests by the affected States for assistance;

(b) Welcomed the measures taken by the Security Council since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 50/51 of 11 December 1995, most recently the note by the President of the Council of 15 January 2002 (S/2002/70),[1] whereby the members of the Council had agreed to extend the mandate of the informal working group of the Council established in 2000 (S/2000/319) to develop general recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of United Nations sanctions, looked forward to the adoption of the proposed outcome document of the working group, in particular those provisions thereof regarding the issues of the unintended impact of sanctions and assistance to States in implementing sanctions, and strongly recommended that the Council continue its efforts to enhance further the effectiveness and transparency of the sanctions committees, to streamline their working procedures and to facilitate access to them by representatives of States that found themselves confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of sanctions;

(c) Invited the Security Council, its sanctions committees and the Secretariat to continue to ensure, as appropriate, that (i) both pre-assessment reports and ongoing assessment reports included as part of their analysis the likely and actual unintended impact of the sanctions on third States and recommended ways in which the negative impact of sanctions could be mitigated; (ii) sanctions committees provided opportunities for third States affected by sanctions to brief them on the unintended impact of sanctions they were experiencing and on assistance needed by them to mitigate the negative impact of sanctions; (iii) the Secretariat continued to provide, upon request, advice and information to third States to help them to pursue means to mitigate the unintended impact of sanctions, for example, on invoking Article 50 of the Charter for consultation with the Council; (iv) where economic sanctions had had severe effects on third States, the Council was able to request the Secretary-General to consider appointing a special representative or dispatching, as necessary, fact-finding missions on the ground to undertake necessary assessments and to identify, as appropriate, possible means of assistance; and (v) the Council was able, in the context of situations referred to in subparagraph (iv) above, to consider establishing working groups to consider such situations;

(d) Requested the Secretary-General to pursue the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/51, 51/208 of 17 December 1996, 52/162 of

15 December 1997, 53/107 of 8 December 1998, 54/107 of 9 December 1999, 55/157 of 12 December 2000, 56/87 of 12 December 2001 and 57/25 of 19 November 2002 and to ensure that the competent units within the Secretariat developed the adequate capacity and appropriate modalities, technical procedures and guidelines to continue, on a regular basis, to collate and coordinate information about international assistance available to third States affected by the implementation of sanctions, to continue developing a possible methodology for assessing the adverse consequences actually incurred by third States and to explore innovative and practical measures of assistance to the affected third States;

(e) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/312) containing a summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group meeting on developing a methodology for assessing the consequences incurred by third States as a result of preventive or enforcement measures and on exploring innovative and practical measures of international assistance to the affected third States, and renewed its invitation to States and relevant international organizations within and outside the United Nations system that had not yet done so to provide their views regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting;

(f) Took note of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the question (A/58/346) and, in particular, of his views on the deliberations and main findings, including the recommendations of the ad hoc expert group on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, as well as the views of States, the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other international organizations, as contained in the previous reports of the Secretary-General (A/54/383 and Add.1, A/55/295 and Add.1 and A/57/165 and Add.1);

(g) Reaffirmed the important role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination in mobilizing and monitoring, as appropriate, the economic assistance efforts of the international community and the United Nations system on behalf of States confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council and, as appropriate, in identifying solutions to the special economic problems of those States;

(h) Took note of the decision of the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2000/32 of 28 July 2000, to continue its consideration of the question of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, invited the Council, at its organizational session for 2004, to make appropriate arrangements for that purpose within its programme of work for 2004, further invited the Council to continue its consideration of the question of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, and decided to transmit the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, together with the relevant background materials, to the Council at its substantive session of 2004;

(i) Invited the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, other international organizations, regional organizations and Member States to address more specifically and directly, where appropriate, the special economic problems of third States affected by sanctions imposed under

Chapter VII of the Charter and, for that purpose, to consider improving procedures for consultations to maintain a constructive dialogue with such States, including through regular and frequent meetings as well as, where appropriate, special meetings between the affected third States and the donor community, with the participation of United Nations agencies and other international organizations;

(j) Requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

2. The present report has been prepared in response to the request contained in paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 58/80 (see para. 1 (j) above).

II. Measures for further improvement of the procedures and working methods of the Security Council and its sanctions committees related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

3. As noted in the 2003 report of the Secretary-General (A/58/346), the deliberations of the Security Council Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions have addressed, inter alia, the question of improving the procedures and working methods of the Council and its sanctions committees related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions. In a letter dated 19 December 2003 to the President of the Council (S/2003/1197), the outgoing Chairman of the Working Group transmitted to the Council in the annex thereto the text of his final report on the work of the Working Group for the period 2002-2003, as adopted by consensus at the Working Group's last meeting on 16 December 2003. Under his chairmanship, the Working Group had held several formal and informal meetings in order to finalize its proposed outcome document. The issues discussed by the Working Group included the degree of access to the sanctions committees by States affected by the unintended consequences of sanctions, as well as assistance to third States affected by sanctions. The Working Group had reached provisional agreement with regard to a number of proposals, among which were: that the Council would, in all relevant cases, seek pre-assessment reports before the adoption of new sanctions regimes; and that the Council might also consider appointing special representatives or dispatching fact-finding missions to assess the effects of sanctions on third States and to identify possible ways of assisting those States.

4. At its 4888th meeting, held on 22 December 2003, the Security Council heard a briefing by the outgoing Chairman of the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions (S/PV.4888). In his briefing, the Chairman reiterated that among the issues preoccupying the Working Group had been: how to enable States suffering the unwanted effects of sanctions to have access to sanctions committees; and what assistance could be provided to third States affected by the application of sanctions. While the Working Group had been operating on the principle that there would be no agreement on any part of the proposed outcome document until agreement was reached on the entire text, the Working Group had nonetheless reached provisional agreement on most of the draft text, with the exception of the issues of the duration and the termination of sanctions.

5. In a note dated 18 December 2003 (S/2003/1185), the President of the Security Council observed that, after consultations among the members of the Council, it had

been agreed that the mandate of the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions should be extended until 31 December 2004. In a note dated 8 January 2004 (S/2004/5), the President of the Council further observed that, following consultations among the members of the Council, it had been agreed that Ambassador Joël W. Adechi (Benin) would serve as Chairman of the Working Group for the period ending 31 December 2004. The Working Group's proposed outcome document thus remains under consideration, with focus being placed on those issues upon which there is no provisional agreement.

6. During the reporting period there were no pre-assessment reports or ongoing assessment reports of the likely and actual unintended impact of sanctions on third States. Nevertheless a number of reports mandated by the Security Council touched upon the humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of sanctions. In a report dated 5 August 2003 (S/2003/793), submitted pursuant to Council resolution 1478 (2003) of 6 May 2003 concerning Liberia, the Secretary-General had provided observations and recommendations on the possible humanitarian and socio-economic impact of the timber sanctions imposed against Liberia. In a letter dated 7 August 2003 from the Acting Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia addressed to the President of the Council, the Acting Chairman of the Committee transmitted to the members of the Council the report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to paragraph 25 of Security Council resolution 1478 (2003) concerning Liberia (S/2003/779, annex, enclosure). In that report, the Panel of Experts also outlined its observations and recommendations concerning the possible humanitarian and socio-economic impact of the timber sanctions imposed on Liberia.

7. In its resolution 1521 (2003) of 22 December 2003, the Security Council requested the Panel of Experts on Liberia to report with observations and recommendations including, inter alia, how to minimize any humanitarian and socio-economic impact of timber sanctions against Liberia. In a report (S/2004/396 and Corr.1, annex, enclosure) transmitted in a letter dated 1 June 2004 from the Chairman of the Committee to the President of the Council, the Panel of Experts outlined various observations and recommendations relating to the humanitarian and socio-economic impact of the timber sanctions.

8. In the period under review, no sanctions committees were approached by Member States concerning special economic problems arising from the implementation of sanctions. However, on 15 December 2003, several Member States did attend an informal meeting of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999) concerning Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, in order to address alleged inaccuracies contained in the second report completed by the Monitoring Group established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1363 (2001) and mandated by the Council to monitor the implementation of the measures imposed against Al-Qaida and the Taliban (S/2003/1070 and Corr.1, annex, enclosure). Although the sanctions measures imposed against Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities are targeted in nature and have not in themselves been cited as causing special economic problems, one of the States appearing before the Committee had argued that the allegations levelled against it by the Monitoring Group might result in decreased tourism, thus causing an adverse effect upon its economy. In this connection, it is interesting to note that in paragraph 11 of resolution 1526 (2004), of 30 January 2004, the Council had requested the Committee to follow up with

States regarding effective implementation of the sanctions measures and to provide States with an opportunity, at the Committee's request, to send representatives to meet with the Committee for more in-depth discussion of relevant issues.

9. As noted in paragraph 5 of the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/58/346), in its resolution 1483 (2003) of 22 May 2003, the Security Council had decided to terminate all prohibitions related to trade with Iraq and the provision of financial or economic resources to Iraq established by resolution 661 (1990) and subsequent relevant resolutions, including resolution 778 (1992). In the same resolution, the Council also decided to maintain the prohibitions related to the sale or supply to Iraq of arms and related material. In resolution 1483 (2003), the Council had also imposed targeted financial sanctions against individuals and entities associated with the former Iraqi regime.

10. In resolution 1483 (2003), the Security Council had further decided that the Committee established pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 661 (1990) would terminate six months later. By resolution 1518 (2003) of 24 November 2003, the Council established a new Committee to administer the targeted financial sanctions imposed by resolution 1483 (2003). As a result of the modifications made to the Iraq sanctions since May 2003, all of the Council's existing sanctions regimes are now targeted in nature and therefore the unintended consequences for civilian populations and third States are minimized.

III. Review of the capacity and modalities of the Secretariat for implementing the intergovernmental mandates and recommendations of the ad hoc expert group meeting on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

11. The Secretary-General has taken note of paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 58/80 (see para. 1 (d) above). In this regard, he would note that the arrangements put in place in the Secretariat in 1996, as described in his report of that year (A/51/317, paras. 4-11), as well as in the 1997 and 2002 reports (A/52/308, para. 5, and A/57/165, para. 9, respectively), continue to apply. It should be noted that, since these arrangements were based on "existing resources", the overall budgetary resources currently available to the departments concerned would have to be maintained in the future.

12. It is also understood that the existing arrangements for interdepartmental cooperation do not preclude further cooperation between the relevant departments, as appropriate, and that the setting in motion of the functions contemplated in several subparagraphs of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 50/51 depends on a request by the Security Council, its organs or interested Member States.

13. The Secretary-General has provided, and will continue to provide, his full support for the intergovernmental deliberations on issues under review, as well as his views and recommendations as required, in order to ensure the implementation of relevant intergovernmental mandates in a timely and efficient manner.

IV. Views provided by Governments and relevant international organizations regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting and related issues of international assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

14. Regarding paragraphs 5 and 9 of General Assembly resolution 58/80 (see paras. 1 (e) and 1 (i) above), no further comments have been received concerning the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (see A/53/312, sect. IV) beyond those summarized in documents A/54/383 and Add.1 and A/55/295 and Add.1.

V. Recent developments related to the role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the area of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions

15. Pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 58/80 (see para. 1 (g) above), the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination have continued to play their respective roles in the area of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions.

General Assembly

16. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly had before it the report of the Secretary-General on economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans (A/58/358 and Corr.1). The Assembly did not take any action on this report.

Economic and Social Council

17. In a note dated 1 June 2004 on assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (E/2004/72), the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Economic and Social Council to General Assembly resolution 58/80, in particular to paragraph 8 thereof (see para. 1 (h) above) in which the Assembly had transmitted to the Council the previous report in this series (A/58/346).

18. At its substantive session of 2004, held in New York from 28 June to 23 July 2004, the Economic and Social Council adopted decision 2004/301 of 23 July 2004, in which it took note of the note by the Secretary-General (E/2004/72) and the report transmitted by the General Assembly (A/58/346).

Committee for Programme and Coordination

19. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), at its forty-fourth session in June-July 2004, considered the annual overview report of the United

Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2003 (E/2004/67). At the request of CPC, the report had included a section on assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations. The report had noted that, as reflected in previous reports of the Secretary-General, the relevant components of the United Nations system and related organizations, including the international financial institutions, remained committed to responding positively to requests for assistance to States confronted with special economic problems as a result of implementing preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council.

20. In presenting the overview report to CPC, the representative of the CEB secretariat reiterated the view that, while the issue of assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations remained important and affected countries deserved the support of the international community, this matter was best addressed in intergovernmental forums, particularly in the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, in the context of reports of the Secretary-General specifically focused on that issue.

Notes

[1] See *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 January 2001-31 July 2002.*

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Agenda item 7
Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Notification by the Secretary-General under Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General*

1. In accordance with the provisions of Article 12, paragraph 2, of the Charter of the United Nations and with the consent of the Security Council, the Secretary-General has the honour to notify the General Assembly of matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that are being dealt with by the Security Council and of matters with which the Council has ceased to deal.

2. The matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security that have been discussed during the period since the notification to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (A/58/354) are the following:

1. International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991;

   International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994.

2. Letters dated 20 and 23 December 1991 from France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

* The reporting period of the present notification is from 2 September 2003 to 31 August 2004.

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3. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.[1]

4. The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

5. Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999).

6. The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

7. Meeting of the Security Council with the potential troop and civilian police-contributing countries to the proposed United Nations peacekeeping operation in Liberia pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

8. The situation in Liberia.

9. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

10. The situation in Sierra Leone.

11. The situation in Burundi.

12. Justice and the rule of law: the United Nations role.

13. The situation in Guinea-Bissau.

14. Letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/939);

    Letter dated 5 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/943).

15. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[2]

16. Letter dated 2 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/934).

17. The situation in Afghanistan.

18. The situation in Timor-Leste.[3]

19. The situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

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[1] In accordance with a note by the President of the Security Council dated 27 August 2002 (S/2002/964), the wording of items concerning "Meeting of the Security Council with troop-contributing countries ... pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, section A" was revised to read "Meeting of the Security Council with troop-contributing countries ... pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B".

[2] Prior to the 3647th meeting, held on 4 April 1996, this item had been formulated as "The situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina".

[3] As from the 4646th meeting, held on 14 November 2002, the wording of the item "The situation in East Timor" was revised to read "The situation in Timor-Leste".

20. Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

21. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

22. International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994.

23. The situation concerning Western Sahara.

24. Women and peace and security.

25. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

26. Security Council mission.

27. The situation in Somalia.

28. The situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

29. The importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations.

30. The responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security: HIV/AIDS and international peacekeeping operations.

31. The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

32. The situation in the Great Lakes region.

33. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

34. The situation in Cyprus.

35. Central African region.

36. Protection of civilians in armed conflict.

37. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

38. Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287).

39. Briefings by Chairmen of Security Council committees and working groups.

40. The situation in the Middle East.

41. Small arms.

42. Children and armed conflict.

43. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

44. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

45. Post-conflict national reconciliation: role of the United Nations.

46. The situation in Georgia.

47 The question concerning Haiti.

48. Cross-border issues in West Africa.

49. The role of business in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building.

50. Decision of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to abandon its weapons of mass destruction programmes.

51. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

52. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

53. Briefing by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.[4]

54. United Nations peacekeeping operations.

55. Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.[5]

56. Letter dated 25 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2004/425).

57. Complex crises and United Nations response.

58. Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan.

59. Role of civil society in post-conflict peace-building.

60. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in stabilization processes.

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[4] As from the 4964th meeting, held on 7 May 2004, the wording of the item "Briefing by His Excellency Mr. Mircea Geoana, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" was revised to read "Briefing by the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe".

[5] As from the 4973rd meeting, held on 20 May 2004, the wording of the item "Briefing by Mr. Ruud Lubbers United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" was revised to read "Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees".

61. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, sections A and B.

3. In accordance with the procedure set out in the note by the President of the Security Council of 29 August 1996 (S/1996/704), the Secretary-General, in his summary statement of 14 February 2004 on matters of which the Security Council is seized and on the stage reached in their consideration submitted pursuant to rule 11 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council (S/2004/20), informed Member States that, as at 1 January 2004, the Security Council had not considered in formal meetings during the preceding five-year period (1999-2003) the following items (the item numbers correspond to those contained in paragraph 8 of document S/2004/20):

1. The Palestine question.

2. The India-Pakistan question (S/628).

3. The Hyderabad question (S/986).

4. Letter dated 20 February 1958 from the representative of the Sudan addressed to the Secretary-General (S/3963).

5. Letter dated 11 July 1960 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/4378).

6. Letter dated 31 December 1960 from the Minister for External Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/4605).

8. The situation in the India/Pakistan subcontinent (S/10411).

9. Letter dated 3 December 1971 from the Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/10409).

10. Complaint by Cuba (S/10993).

11. Arrangements for the proposed Peace Conference on the Middle East.

16. The Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question.

17. Request by the Libyan Arab Republic and Pakistan for consideration of the serious situation arising from recent developments in the occupied Arab territories (S/12017).

18. The situation in the occupied Arab territories.

19. The question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

20. The situation between Iran and Iraq.

22. Letter dated 19 February 1983 from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15615).

23. Letter dated 8 August 1983 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/15914).

24. Letter dated 22 March 1984 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/16431).

25. Letter dated 1 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17509).

26. Letter dated 4 February 1986 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17787).

27. Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17991);

    Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17992);

    Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17993);

    Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17994).

28. Letter dated 19 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/19798).

29. Letter dated 4 January 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20364);

    Letter dated 4 January 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20367).

31. Letter dated 2 February 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/21120).

43. Complaint by Ukraine regarding the decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation concerning Sevastopol.

56. Protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations.

67. Letter dated 29 June 1998 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/581);

Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/582);

Letter dated 25 June 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/1998/583).

69. Threats to peace and security caused by international terrorist acts.

4. Subsequently, in accordance with the procedure contained in document S/1996/704, the Secretary-General received notifications from Member States requesting him to retain items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31 and 43 as they appear in paragraph 3 above, on the list of matters of which the Security Council is seized.

5. Also, pursuant to the decisions of the Security Council referred to above and in the absence of receipt of any notification to the contrary by 31 March 2004 requesting the retention of an item listed in paragraph 3 above, the remaining items mentioned therein, that is, items 22, 23, 24, 56, 67 and 69, were deleted from the list of matters of which the Security Council is seized.

6. During the period since the notification to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (A/58/354), the Security Council has not discussed at a formal meeting the following matters relative to the maintenance of international peace and security of which it remains seized:

1. The Palestine question.
2. The India-Pakistan question (S/628).
3. The Hyderabad question (S/986).
4. Letter dated 20 February 1958 from the representative of the Sudan addressed to the Secretary-General (S/3963).
5. Letter dated 11 July 1960 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/4378).
6. Letter dated 31 December 1960 from the Minister for External Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/4605).
7. The situation in the India/Pakistan subcontinent (S/10411).
8. Letter dated 3 December 1971 from the Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/10409).
9. Complaint by Cuba (S/10993).
10. Arrangements for the proposed Peace Conference on the Middle East.
11. The Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question.
12. Request by the Libyan Arab Republic and Pakistan for consideration of the serious situation arising from recent developments in the occupied Arab territories (S/12017).
13. The situation in the occupied Arab territories.

14. The question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

15. The situation between Iran and Iraq.

16. Letter dated 1 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17509).

17. Letter dated 4 February 1986 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17787).

18. Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17991);

    Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Burkina Faso to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17992);

    Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17993);

    Letter dated 15 April 1986 from the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17994).

19. Letter dated 19 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/19798).

20. Letter dated 4 January 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20364);

    Letter dated 4 January 1989 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20367).

21. Letter dated 2 February 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/21120).

22. The situation in Angola.

23. The situation concerning Rwanda.

24. The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

25. Complaint by Ukraine regarding the decree of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation concerning Sevastopol.

26. The situation in Tajikistan and along the Tajik-Afghan border.

27. The situation in Croatia.

28. International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991.

29. The situation in the Central African Republic.

30. The situation in Africa.

31. Letter dated 11 March 1998 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/223);

    Letter dated 27 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/272).

32. The responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

33. Maintenance of peace and security and post-conflict peace-building.

34. Promoting peace and security: humanitarian activities relevant to the Security Council.

35. Letter dated 24 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/320).

36. Letter dated 7 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/523).

37. Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998) and 1203 (1998).

38. Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998) and 1239 (1999).

39. Promoting peace and security: humanitarian assistance to refugees in Africa.

40. Role of the Security Council in the prevention of armed conflicts.

41. Protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones.

42. Briefing by Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans.

43. Maintaining peace and security: humanitarian aspects of issues before the Security Council.

44. General issues relating to sanctions.

45. Ensuring an effective role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, particularly in Africa.

46. Briefing by Judge Gilbert Guillaume, President of the International Court of Justice.

47. Briefing by Mrs. Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

48. Ensuring an effective role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

49. No exit without strategy.

50. Letter dated 10 November 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Solomon Islands to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/1088).

51. Briefing by the Secretary-General.

52. The situation in Guinea following recent attacks along its borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone.

53. Strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries.

54. Briefing by His Excellency Mr. Mircea Geoana, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

55. Peace-building: towards a comprehensive approach.

56. The situation in Guinea following recent attacks along its border with Liberia and Sierra Leone;

    The situation in Liberia;

    The situation in Sierra Leone.

57. Letter dated 4 March 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/191).

58. The situation along the borders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

59. The situation in Guinea following recent attacks along its borders with Liberia and Sierra Leone;

    The situation in Sierra Leone.

60. Wrap-up discussion on the work of the Security Council for the month of June 2001.

61. Wrap-up discussion on the work of the Security Council for the current month.

62. Security Council resolution 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998.

63. Briefing by His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Čović, Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

64. Security Council resolution 1054 (1996) of 24 April 1996.

65. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, section A.

66. Nobel Peace Prize.

67. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, section A.

68. Letter dated 30 April 2001 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/434).

69. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, section A.

70. Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations.

71. Briefing by Mr. Ruud Lubbers, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

72. Food aid in the context of conflict settlement: Afghanistan and other crisis areas.

73. Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001), annex II, section A.

74. United Nations peacekeeping.

75. High-level meeting of the Security Council on the anniversary of 11 September 2001: acts of international terrorism.

76. Strengthening cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central African region in the maintenance of peace and security.

77. Africa's food crisis as a threat to peace and security.

78. Letter dated 29 November 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1317).

79. Briefings by the Chairmen of the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993) concerning the situation in Angola, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia, the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, and the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations.

80. High-level meeting of the Security Council: combating terrorism.

81. Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.

82. Proliferation of small arms and light weapons and mercenary activities: threats to peace and security in West Africa.

83. The Security Council and regional organizations: facing the new challenges to international peace and security.

84. The role of the Security Council in the pacific settlement of disputes.

85. Response to the humanitarian situation in Iraq.

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Fifty-ninth session
Item 111 of the provisional agenda*
Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Strengthening the Department of Public Information, within the existing capacity, in order to support and enhance the United Nations web site in all official languages of the Organization: status of implementation

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In paragraph 42 of its resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003, the General Assembly recalled its decision 57/579 of 20 December 2002 and requested the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the United Nations web site through further redeployment to the required language posts and to report on the status of its implementation to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The present report is submitted in compliance with that request.

The Department of Public Information is continuing to make all efforts to implement decision 57/579, being mindful of the need to strike a balance between other mandated activities competing for resources. Progress has been made through the redeployment of 1 P-4, 1 P-2 and 6 General Service posts and other innovative measures. However, with the continuing growth of content of the web site, there are no further opportunities within the current budget of the Department to absorb the costs involved in implementing the proposals put forward in document A/57/355 without adversely affecting implementation of Member States' mandates for other activities.

* A/59/150.

04-50193 (E) 280904

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in compliance with the request contained in paragraph 42 of General Assembly resolution 58/270 of 23 December 2003, in which the Assembly recalls its decision 57/579 of 20 December 2002 and requests the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the United Nations web site through further redeployment of resources to the required language posts and to report on the status of its implementation to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

2. In its decision 57/579, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to continue to strengthen the United Nations web site through further redeployment of resources within the Department of Public Information, giving priority to the language posts required and to keep the question of the equality among the six official languages on the web site under review. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of the proposals on strengthening the web site contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/355). Notably, that report outlined the resources required by the Department for the ongoing development and maintenance of the United Nations web site in all official languages excluding the central infrastructure support needs of the Information Technology Services Division in the Department of Management and those relating to the provision of content in the official languages by the respective content-providing offices.

3. The continued development and enhancement of the United Nations web site in all the official languages of the Organization has been one of the major issues under consideration before the Committee on Information since its twenty-first session in 1999. Accordingly, six separate reports[1] have been submitted to the Committee on Information in which the Department of Public Information presented a variety of options — along with associated resource requirements — for achieving full or partial language parity. In the seventh and latest report (A/58/217), the Department reported on the status of implementation of proposals previously identified to strengthen the language capacity in the United Nations Website Section through redeployment of posts and streamlining the workflow, thereby increasing synergies and reducing compartmentalization.

II. Current capacity of the Department of Public Information

4. The United Nations web site began operations in 1995 as a pilot project through the joint efforts of the Department of Public Information and the Information Technology Services Division of the Department of Management. There being no formal mandate for the web site but as a tool considered vital for the dissemination of information on the work of the Organization, given the ever-increasing impact of the Internet, the Department of Public Information has made exceptional efforts to redeploy existing resources to make the web site operational and ensure its continued enhancement and maintenance.

5. In adopting the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 in December 2003, the General Assembly approved the redeployment of one P-4 and six General Service posts from the closure of United Nations Information Centres in Western Europe to the News and Media Division to strengthen the multilingual capacity of the United Nations Website Section. Earlier, in 2003, a P-2 post was redeployed to

the Website Section from the Outreach Division of the Department. As a result, the current complement of posts in the Website Section stands at 25 (1 P-5, 3 P-4s, 6 P-3s, 3 P-2s and 12 GS). In addition, in accordance with paragraph 50 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2003/2), pending identification and allocation of further regular posts, the requirements of the Section are accommodated through three General Service (Other level) positions currently on general temporary assistance.

III. Status of implementation

6. Notwithstanding the continuing effort to identify resources necessary to implement fully the proposals outlined in document A/57/355, with the redeployment of the seven posts from the closed United Nations Information Centres in Western Europe, six further posts (4 P-4 and 2 P-3) would be required in the Website Section.

7. Of the seven posts approved for redeployment by the General Assembly during the biennium 2004-2005, the P-4 post has been advertised and recruitment is in the final stage. All of the General Service (Other level) posts were advertised and five have already been filled through the recruitment process. The remaining post, that of the Website Assistant in Chinese, has not been filled owing to the absence of eligible internal candidates. In addition, some of these posts have been filled through promotion within the Section. In the light of paragraph 25 of resolution 58/270, with limited exceptions, the Secretary-General was requested to suspend recruitment action for new vacancies in General Service posts for the biennium 2004-2005. Consequently, the filling of vacated Language Assistant posts will be delayed, as the pool of candidates would be limited.

8. In addition to the redeployment of posts to the Website Section, the Department has continued to look for innovative ways to meet the request of the General Assembly to strengthen the United Nations web site. It has expanded the United Nations News Centre — one of the most visited areas of the web site — into all official languages, undertaken major technological improvements to enhance productivity and facilitate the availability of materials in all official languages and put into place creative arrangements, such as the agreements with universities in Belarus, China and Spain for pro bono translation of information materials.

9. The Department's efforts have seen the number of pages processed for posting in each of the languages rise significantly. On average, each month nearly 500 new pages are posted and 2,800 pages are revised in all languages. Full utilization of all the posts redeployed under the present biennium budget will enable a further increase in the average number of pages posted in languages other than English. Increased postings are helping to fuel significant growth in the number of users of the web sites in other official languages. On an average day, over 940,000 pages are currently being viewed by users, up from 720,000 page-views daily in 2002. Over the past 12 months, substantial increases in the visits to the language sites have been recorded. The chart below depicts the growth experienced by each of the official language web sites over a one-year period, comparing the month of June in 2003 and in 2004. The chart shows the number of unique visitors as well as page-views during the month.

Percentage increases, number of unique visitors[1] and pages viewed by language on the United Nations web site, comparing June 2003 to June 2004

Language	*Month*	*Unique visitors*	*Pages viewed*
Arabic	June 2004	60 590	613 900
	June 2003	50 468	353 266
	% increase	20.06%	73.78%
Chinese	June 2004	124 084	1 182 083
	June 2003	41 760	318 018
	% increase	197.14%	271.70%
English	June 2004	1 921 382	21 209 246
	June 2003	1 781 855	17 659 070
	% increase	7.83%	20.10%
French	June 2004	163 454	1 089 373
	June 2003	152 126	832 116
	% increase	7.45%	30.92%
Russian	June 2004	61 221	658 726
	June 2003	40 751	367 202
	% increase	50.23%	79.39%
Spanish	June 2004	246 044	1 232 877
	June 2003	214 398	969 506
	% increase	14.76%	27.17%
Total United Nations web site	June 2004	2 576 775	25 986 205
	June 2003	2 281 358	20 499 178
	% increase	12.95%	26.77%

[1] When tracking the amount of traffic on a web site, the term "unique visitors" refers to a person who visits a web site more than once within a specified period of time. Software that tracks and counts web site traffic can distinguish between visitors who only visit the site once and unique visitors who return to the site. Different from a site's hits or page views — which are measured by the number of files that are requested from a site — unique visitors are measured according to their unique Internet protocol (IP) addresses, which are like online fingerprints and unique visitors are counted only once no matter how many times they visit the site during a specified time period.

10. In increasing the volume of material in official languages, the Department is facing the challenge of expanded responsibilities and an increase in the workload required to ensure continued maintenance of the web site. For example, the News Centres require constant updating as well as the daily input of news, the translated materials from the universities need to be edited, processed, formatted and converted for posting and the continually expanding database programming needs ongoing monitoring and enhancement. In addition, the Committee on Information has requested the Department to ensure that all new and revised pages adhere to the obligatory level of compliance with recognized industry standards regarding accessibility by persons with disabilities.

11. The Department therefore is faced with trying to close the extensive gap between English and the other official languages in the context of a continuing heavy increase in the volume of material in which English continues to dominate. The combination of these factors places increasing demands on the United Nations web site and the Department's current resource capacity continues to be severely strained. As a result, while progress will continue to be made, present resources are not adequate to sustain a rapid expansion of pages and to meet the full maintenance requirements of the United Nations web site. The Department of Public Information is not able to redeploy further resources without adversely affecting other mandated programmes and activities.

IV. Conclusion

12. **The Department of Public Information is continuing to make all efforts to implement the decision of the General Assembly to strengthen the United Nations web site in all official languages, being mindful of the need to strike a balance between other mandated activities competing for resources. The Department has made progress through redeployment and other innovative methods to expand the volume of material in languages other than English, but faces the challenge of continued expansion of material and an increase in maintenance requirements on the expanding number of language pages. At the same time, the Department is not at present in a position to redeploy more resources to meet this increasing challenge without adversely affecting other mandated programmes and activities.**

Notes

[1] A/AC.198/1999/6; A/AC.198/1999/9 and Corr.1 and 2; A/AC.198/2000/7-A/AC.172/2000/4; A/AC.198/2001/8; A/AC.198/2002/6; and A/57/355.

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Item 151 of the provisional agenda*
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Letter dated 8 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the address by Russian Federation President V. V. Putin of 4 September 2004 in connection with the recent terrorist acts in the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be very grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-ninth regular session of the General Assembly under item 151 of its provisional agenda, "Measure to eliminate international terrorism", and also as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Andrey **Denisov**

* A/59/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 8 September 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Address by Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin

4 September 2004

It is difficult to speak, and it is painful.

A terrible tragedy has occurred in our world. Over the last few days, each of us has suffered greatly and taken deeply to heart all that was happening in the Russian town of Beslan. There, we found ourselves confronted not simply with killers, but people who used their weapons against defenceless children.

And now, I should like, first of all, to address words of support and condolences to those people who lost what they treasure most in life — their children, relatives and dear ones.

I ask that we remember all those who perished at the hands of terrorists in recent days.

* * *

There have been many tragic pages and severe ordeals in Russian history. Today, we are living under conditions that came about after the collapse of a vast and great State, a State, which, unfortunately, proved to be unable to survive in a rapidly changing world. But, despite all the difficulties, we were able to preserve the core of that giant — the Soviet Union. And we named the new country the Russian Federation.

We all expected changes, changes for the better. But we proved to be absolutely unprepared for much of what changed in our lives. Why?

We are living under an economy in transition and a political system that does not correspond to the state and level of our society's development.

We are living at a time when internal conflicts and inter-ethnic discord, which were once firmly suppressed by the ruling ideology, have intensified.

We stopped paying due attention to defence and security issues and we allowed corruption to undermine our judicial and law enforcement systems.

Furthermore, our country, which at one time had the most powerful system for defending its external borders, suddenly found itself defenceless both from the East and from the West.

It will take many years and billions of roubles in order to create new, modern and genuinely protected borders. But here also we could have been more effective, if we had acted at the right time and professionally.

In general, we need to admit that we did not understand the complexity and danger of the processes at work in our own country and in the world as a whole.

In any case, we were unable to react to them in an adequate manner. We showed ourselves to be weak. And the weak get beaten.

Some want to wrest from us "a bigger piece of the pie", and others are helping them.

They are providing help in the belief that Russia, as one of the major nuclear powers in the world, still represents a threat to someone. Therefore, this threat must be eliminated.

And terrorism, of course, is just an instrument to achieve these aims.

As I have said many times already, we have confronted crises, revolts and terrorist acts time and again. But what has happened now is an inhuman crime by terrorists that is unprecedented in its cruelty. It is not a challenge to the President, the parliament or the Government. It is a challenge to all of Russia. To our entire people.

This is an attack upon our country.

* * *

The terrorists consider that they are stronger than us. They think that they can frighten us with their cruelty, paralyse our will and demoralize our society. And, it would seem that we have a choice — either to resist them or agree to their demands. To surrender, to let them destroy and dismember Russia in the hope that they will finally leave us in peace.

As the President, the head of the Russian State, as someone who swore an oath to defend this country and its territorial integrity, and simply as a citizen of Russia, I am convinced that, in reality, we have simply no choice at all. Because to allow ourselves to be blackmailed and to succumb to panic would be to condemn millions of people to an endless series of bloody conflicts like those in Nagorny Karabakh, Transnistria and other well-known tragedies. We cannot ignore an obvious fact.

What we are dealing with is not simply individual acts intended to frighten us or isolated terrorist attacks. We are dealing with direct intervention on the part of international terrorists against Russia.

This is a total, cruel and full-scale war that is taking the lives of our fellow countrymen again and again.

The entire experience of the world shows that such wars, unfortunately, do not end quickly. Under these conditions, we simply cannot and must not live in as carefree a manner as previously.

We must create a much more effective security system and demand that our law enforcement agencies carry out actions that correspond to the level and scale of the new threats that have emerged.

But the most important thing is to mobilize the nation in the face of this common danger.

Events in other countries have shown that terrorists meet the most effective resistance precisely in places where they encounter not only the power of the State but also an organized and united civil society.

* * *

My fellow countrymen!

Those who sent the bandits to carry out that dreadful crime made it their goal to turn our peoples against each other, put fear in the hearts of Russian citizens, and unleash bloody inter-ethnic strife in the Northern Caucasus.

I should like to say the following in this regard.

First, a series of measures aimed at strengthening the country's unity will soon be prepared.

Second, I consider it necessary to create a new system for coordinating the forces and means for exercising control over the situation in the Northern Caucasus.

Third, it is necessary to create an effective anti-crisis management system, including entirely new approaches to the way law enforcement agencies operate.

I should like to point out in particular that all these measures will be carried out in complete accordance with our country's Constitution.

Dear friends!

We are together experiencing very difficult and painful days. I should like now to thank all those who showed endurance and civic responsibility.

We were and always will be stronger than them, stronger through our morals, our courage and our sense of human solidarity. I saw this again last night. In Beslan, which is literally permeated with grief and pain, people were caring for and supporting each other more than ever. They were not afraid to risk their own lives for the lives and peace of others. Even in the most inhuman conditions, they remained human beings.

It is impossible to accept the pain caused by such loss. But these ordeals have brought us even closer together and have made us re-evaluate many things.

Today we must be together. That is the only way that we will vanquish the enemy.

United Nations A/59/338

General Assembly

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9 September 2004

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Fifty-ninth session
Item 77 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

The occupied Syrian Golan

Report of the Secretary-General**

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 58/100 of 9 December 2003, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with the relevant resolutions on the occupied Syrian Golan, in particular Security Council resolution 497 (1981), in which the Council, inter alia, decided that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan was null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, rescind forthwith its decision;
>
> "2. *Also calls upon* Israel to desist from changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan and in particular to desist from the establishment of settlements;
>
> "3. *Determines* that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken or to be taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that purport to alter the character and legal status of the occupied Syrian Golan are null and void, constitute a flagrant violation of international law and of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and have no legal effect;
>
> "4. *Calls upon* Israel to desist from imposing Israeli citizenship and Israeli identity cards on the Syrian citizens in the occupied Syrian Golan and

* A/59/150.

** The present document was submitted after the deadline established by the General Assembly so as to give the Government concerned the maximum possible time to submit its comments.

04-50459 (E) 051004

from its repressive measures against the population of the occupied Syrian Golan;

"5. *Deplores* the violations by Israel of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949;

"6. *Calls once again upon* Member States not to recognize any of the legislative or administrative measures and actions referred to above;

"7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 6 August 2004, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Government of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the above-mentioned resolution, that the Government inform him of any steps it had taken or envisaged taking, concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

4. By a note verbale dated 6 August 2004, the Secretary-General also drew the attention of Member States to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 58/100.

United Nations A/59/339

General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth session
Item 77 of the provisional agenda*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories

Report of the Secretary-General**

1 The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/97 of 9 December 2003, the operative part of which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;
>
> "2. *Demands* that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and that it comply scrupulously with the provisions of the Convention;
>
> "3. *Calls upon* all High Contracting Parties to the Convention, in accordance with article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions, to continue to exert all efforts to ensure respect for its provisions by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

* A/59/150.
** The present document was submitted after the deadline established by the General Assembly so as to give the Government concerned the maximum possible time to submit its comments.

04-50465 (E) 051004

"4. *Reiterates* the need for speedy implementation of the relevant recommendations contained in its resolutions of the tenth emergency special session with regard to ensuring respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the provisions of the Convention;

"5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 6 August 2004, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Government of the State of Israel, in which he requested, in view of his reporting responsibilities under the resolution, that the Government of Israel informs him of any steps the Government had taken or envisaged taking concerning the implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolution.

3. No reply had been received at the time of the preparation of the present report.

4. By a note verbale dated 6 August 2004, the Secretary-General also drew the attention of all States parties to the Convention to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 58/97 and paragraph 6 of Assembly resolution 58/100 of 9 December 2003.

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General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 107 (c) of the provisional agenda*
Human rights questions: human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on assistance to Sierra Leone in the field of human rights

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on assistance to Sierra Leone in the field of human rights, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2004/86.

* A/59/150.

04-50435 (E) 300904

Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on assistance to Sierra Leone in the field of human rights

Summary

This report follows previous reports of the High Commissioner to the General Assembly (A/58/379) and to the Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/2004/106). It contains information on developments through to the middle of August 2004.

Sierra Leone stands distinct from other countries of the Mano River Basin. United Nations assistance over seven years has provided a basis for lasting peace, transformation of the war-torn country and establishment of institutions, mechanisms and processes for national healing and reconciliation. Most significantly, important transitional justice mechanisms have been established with assistance from the United Nations. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has concluded its public activities and will be publishing its report soon and the Special Court has already commenced trials of some alleged war criminals. Several thousand former combatants have been successfully disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated into communities through the United Nations-assisted disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme and local government elections involving the opposition as well as independent candidates have been conducted.

State authority has been consolidated further with the commissioning by the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) of magistrates courts, police and penitentiary services, resulting in a surge in their numbers. The Human Rights Section is currently assisting staff by providing both refresher training and induction courses to enable them to function effectively and in accordance with international standards. The UNAMSIL drawdown plan is consistently guided by gradual transfer of human rights protection and promotion skills and a handover of responsibilities to local human rights non-governmental organizations and government apparatus.

A critical challenge to peace, justice and reconciliation is the worsening socio-economic conditions, attributed in part to the country's inability to implement targeted Millennium Development Goals and its obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These issues would need to be addressed in order to consolidate the gains of the past years.

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I. Introduction

1. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 2004/86, requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to the Commission at its sixty-first session on the human rights situation in Sierra Leone, including with reference to reports from the Human Rights Section of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

II. The human rights situation

A. Reports of the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

2. Since the High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted a report on the human rights situation in Sierra Leone to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session (A/58/379), the Secretary-General has submitted the twentieth (S/2003/1201), twenty-first (S/2004/228) and twenty-second (S/2004/536) reports to the Security Council. Of note also is the nineteenth report (S/2003/863), which was submitted after the above-mentioned report of the High Commissioner to the General Assembly.

3. In his twenty-first report, the Secretary-General provided a detailed outline of his earlier proposal for a residual United Nations presence in Sierra Leone until December 2005 to ensure a smooth transfer of security responsibilities to the national Government. He noted that peace in the country remained fragile as police and armed forces continued to face difficulties, making it impossible for the Government to assume responsibility for national and external security by the time UNAMSIL was set to depart in December 2004.

4. In resolution 1537 (2004), the Security Council decided that a residual UNAMSIL presence would remain for an initial period of six months from 1 January 2005, reduced from the December 2004 level of 5,000 troops by 28 February 2005 to a new ceiling of 3,250 troops, 141 military observers and 80 United Nations civilian police personnel. Human rights staff would be included.

B. Right to life and security of the person

5. The death penalty was not carried out in Sierra Leone during the reporting period. However, reports from human rights officers indicate that 15 persons, including two women, currently incarcerated at the Pademba Road Prison, are on death row following convictions for murder, armed robbery and other felonious offences. Some groups are mounting pressure on the Government to abolish the death penalty in accordance with emerging international practice.

6. There are serious concerns about the prolonged pre-trial detention of some 97 ex-combatants of the former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the so-called "West Side Boys" (a group of Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) armed men). This group was arrested in 2000 for holding British troops hostage but have not been brought to trial, despite having been indicted by a local court.

7. There have also been cases of deaths in detention centres suggestive of abuses of detainees and absence of humane treatment as required under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. On 7 February 2004, a juvenile was beaten to death in the Kingdom remand home in Freetown. Five people died in the Pademba Road Prison in Freetown at diverse times from alleged poor detention conditions. Notwithstanding, the conditions have not improved. Reports of the police / Criminal Investigation Department investigation conducted into these cases are still pending. In all its encounters with penitentiary officials, the UNAMSIL Human Rights Section has continuously emphasized the importance of ensuring that detention facilities meet minimum international standards. Additionally, training is continuously offered to relevant personnel on existing international standards.

C. Amputees

8. The Human Rights Section closely monitors the living conditions of amputees and makes recommendations in line with Commission resolution 2003/80, in which the Government was urged to give priority attention, in cooperation with the international community, to the special needs of mutilated victims.

9. The situation of amputees and war wounded has not improved since the last reporting period. The Norwegian Refugee Council, supported by the World Food Programme, (WFP) constructed new houses, resettled amputees, and provided them with daily food rations, skill training and micro-credits and free schooling for their children. The majority of the 329 amputees interviewed by the Human Rights Section in March 2003 benefited from the housing programme and those registered are still receiving food rations. Plans are under way to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the situation of amputees for 2004. Nevertheless, no effective mechanism has been put in place to follow up on the skill training provided and many of the amputee children still do not have access to education. Girls, whose access to education is already limited, are disproportionately affected. The conditions of amputees are exacerbated by lack of adequate sanitation, proper medical care and clean drinking water and access to viable income-generating activities in amputee resettlement camps throughout the country. Many amputees currently live in extremely difficult conditions. Interviews conducted by human rights officers indicate that most of them are looking to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to provide real opportunities for their rehabilitation and reintegration.

D. Children's rights

10. Children and women bore the brunt of the Sierra Leone conflict. While women were viciously abused during this period, children were systematically forced into a culture and practice of violence of the most depraved kind. Children, sometimes as young as 6, were abducted, drugged and forced to commit atrocities. They were raised in the bush and trained to maim and kill. Children were trained to aim to surpass each other in atrocious acts as a demonstration of their prowess in war. Some were compelled by their abductors to carry out heinous atrocities, which included killing close family members or relatives. UNAMSIL has successfully disarmed all children who took part in the war and has been assisting in implementing reintegration programmes. However, the scars of the war are evident

in the traumatic conditions of some teenagers and young adults in Sierra Leone. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1400 (2002), UNAMSIL pays special attention to the protection of women and children.

11. A number of factors have been identified as being responsible for the depressed level of school enrolment, especially of girls. These include lack of facilities and trained teachers, parental social-cultural behaviour and economic constraints. Cultural norms and traditional practices routinely infringe upon the rights of children and often result in discrimination, especially against the girl child.

12. The Government responded by undertaking major initiatives to promote school enrolment. These included the provision of free education and school materials to girls attending secondary schools in the north and east. The results of these efforts have been encouraging. For instance, in Koidu, Kono District, of the 10,769 pupils and 3,629 students registered in post-primary schools, 4,829 and 1,167 respectively are girls. Of the 737 students registered in vocational schools, 371 (50.3 per cent) are girls. In Kambia District in the north, girls constitute 40 per cent of primary school pupils and 17 per cent of students in post-primary institutions.

13. In Port Loko District, a pilot project initiated in 2003 to support the education of the girl child is expected to benefit 1,000 girls during the current academic year. Coordinated by the Human Rights Section, UNAMSIL and the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), this project is supported by War Child, Plan International and WFP. The project aims to take 300 girls off the street and enrol them in school, and also support another 700 already in school. WFP will provide daily school meals while Plan International has agreed to assist with school materials.

14. The fact still remains, however, that girls often drop out by the time they reach secondary school, implying that much more still needs to be done to retain girls in school. While many girls do not have access to schooling and are reduced to street petty trading, girls in the country are often made to work during class hours. For instance, in the north of the country, girls pick mangoes rather than attend classes during the harvest season. In the rainy season, which in some parts of the country lasts for about nine months, some teachers and parents alike tend to ask students of both sexes to help on the farms rather than attend classes.

15. The practice of corporal punishment remains rife in primary and secondary education. It is still on the statute books and can be imposed as a penalty for juveniles by a court of law.

16. International standards prohibit all forms of work that is harmful to children that compromises their education or prevents them from going to school. Sierra Leone has an endemic problem of child labour, which is exacerbated by extreme poverty. In this context, immediate economic advantage supersedes all other considerations, leading to the widespread use of children in economic activities to the detriment of their education and proper development. The previous report (A/58/379) described the extensive use of children, mostly boys between the ages of 6 and 18, in mining activities in Kono and Tonga. This practice has not stopped, and neither has the Government taken any concrete measures to address it. The discovery of diamonds in Kamakwie, in the north, has further expanded the possibilities for child labour. In the area, boys as young as 10 have been seen

carrying mining implements heading for the sites, while girls are involved in a number of service functions like peddling foodstuffs in the mines.

17. There are no available data on health indicators for children. However, information form the District Medical Officer in Port Loko revealed that children are the most affected by diseases ranging from malaria, acute respiratory infection, diarrhoea and tuberculosis. In Kenema District, a sharp increase in the mortality of children under 2 years has emerged, owing to inadequate and poor nutrition, malaria, typhoid and lack of access to medical treatment.

18. As noted in the previous report, the limited number of medical doctors, nurses and medical clinics in the districts has contributed to the prevalence of self-trained doctors, commonly known as "pepper doctors". As the only accessible treatment, mainly in rural areas, these "pepper doctors" prescribe and provide medicines as well as administer injections, causing further health complications that on occasion lead to avoidable deaths. It is important that the Government take appropriate action to address this health hazard.

19. The socio-economic context and economic hardship, coupled with inadequate childcare programmes in the country, have led to a noticeable increase in the number of street children. These children are often part of criminal gangs that steal or beg for a living. Most of these children lost their parents during the war. Some were abandoned and others ran away from domestic abuse. Among these children are a substantial number of young girls subjected to abduction, prostitution, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Some girl prostitutes still live with relatives or parents and/or are schoolgirls engaging in commercial sex as a means of survival. Some are breadwinners for their families.

20. There are equally concerns regarding the trafficking of children in Sierra Leone. This can take the form of children being sent often from rural areas to the cities, to stay with relatives or friends of parents, who force them to work, including as prostitutes. Trafficking also has an international dimension, as indicated by the arrest of three persons in August 2004 charged with smuggling 29 Sierra Leonean children to the United States for adoption. The accused are linked with local aid agencies running orphanages and had persuaded parents to give up their children, who were then smuggled to a neighbouring country and flown to the United States.

21. Both early marriages and forced marriages lead to systematic rape, prevent girls from attending further education and lead to health complications, contributing to the high maternal mortality rate in the country. In a recent case, a 13-year old girl from Makeni district was taken out of Sierra Leone by her parents to Guinea-Bissau and forced into marriage. It took the intervention of the Human Rights Section, community leaders and pressure groups to secure the return of the girl, who is expected to go back to school soon. Action for Children in Conflict, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) based in Makeni, is also currently providing provisional sanctuary to two girls who ran away from their parents in Kabala, Koinadugu district, to avoid forced marriage. The Human Rights Section is currently stepping up campaigns against both early and forced marriage.

22. The number of children in conflict with the law is high. However, many of the cases are related to minor offences such as loitering and larceny. The police, with the intervention of the Human Rights Section, now detain children as a last resort and bail is often granted. Cases concerning juveniles are as a rule settled by the

Family Support Unit (FSU) of the police before they reach court. There are nevertheless concerns related to the lack of official detention or remand facilities for children in the districts. A child mother who reportedly drowned her 19-month old baby a year ago was held in detention at Port Loko police station for eight months, the reason being, besides the lack of adequate facilities, that neither the police nor the magistrate has the power to grant bail to murder suspects, regardless of age. The High Court sits only once a year, for five days.

23. There is only one remand home and one approved correctional school for children in conflict with the law in Sierra Leone and both are located in Freetown. These detention centres do not meet the international minimum standards and are in urgent need of upgrading. On 7 February 2004, excessive use of force by a caretaker at the remand home led to the death of a juvenile in custody, whose body was later found in a plastic bag dumped outside the building. This action sparked a public outcry throughout the country, as a result of which the Government requested UNAMSIL and the United Nations Children's Fund to jointly conduct an independent review of the whole juvenile justice system, highlighting its limitations and constraints and making practical recommendations for short-medium-and long-term improvements. While the review is ongoing, the alleged perpetrator of this crime is still at liberty.

E. Gender-based violence and women's rights

24. Through training and public awareness campaigns, the Human Rights Section, in conjunction with local and international human rights and women's organizations and international NGOs, have promoted the human rights of women in Sierra Leone. There is improved awareness of the rights of women among the police who are becoming more sensitive, especially to victims of sexual abuse. The FSU has been involved in raising awareness at the community level and encouraging members of the public, in particular women and girls, to report cases of sexual abuse. The police have become more proactive in working with NGOs such as the International Rescue Committee (IRC), which operates the Rainbow Centres for victims of sexual assault in Freetown and Kenema. There is also growing collaboration between the police and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, which has resulted in the drawing up of a memorandum of understanding on the procedures for cases of sexual and physical violence against children, in particular girls.

25. The convictions handed down between February and April 2004 by courts in Freetown of 12 persons for gender-based violence and related offences against minors are indications of the progress that has been made in addressing gender-related issues. The convicts were sentenced to jail terms ranging from 6 months to 15 years for unlawful carnal knowledge and indecent assault on girls aged between 4 and 14 years. These convictions were due to the efforts of FSU which set up a committee to follow up cases at court and ensure that due process took its course. A random survey conducted by the Human Rights Section in Moyamba district revealed that over 30 per cent of the female students interviewed had at some point been forced to have sexual intercourse against their will.

26. Part of the strategy in the fight against gender-based violence and in support of women's rights is the development of a solid informational base. In this respect, the United Nations Civilian Police supported FSU in maintaining a database on sexual

offences. An initial assessment of information contained in the database showed that rape and unlawful carnal knowledge (rape where the victim is 14 or under) continue to be the most frequently reported incidents, both to the police and at the Rainbow Centres run by IRC.

27. Despite the progress made, more needs to be done to raise awareness on the rights of women at community level and among judicial officers, especially at the community level. In most areas where there are no Rainbow Centres, rape victims are still expected to pay a doctor for a medical certificate and the process of taking cases to court remains long and cumbersome.

28. Discrimination against women continues and results in various forms of violence such as deprivation, psychological abuse and physical assault. The most prevalent forms of violence against women remain domestic violence, sexual assault, including rape, female genital mutilation (FGM) and denial of economic rights such as the right to inherit land and property. Such practices are not perceived in society as violence. It is this perception and the cultural values that justify them that should be the focus of the collective effort to address violence and discrimination against women.

29. Efforts of UNAMSIL in this regard have increased awareness of the problems and encouraged the police to treat such cases as serious crimes. Available statistics indicate that more cases are being reported to the police, but very few are prosecuted because women usually withdraw them for fear that their husbands, who are also breadwinners, will go to jail. However, a substantial number of cases go unreported for a number of reasons such as cultural acquiescence and lack of information on available redress options. Government therefore needs to do more to stop the practices by reviewing existing laws and harmonizing them with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to which Sierra Leone is party.

30. Under the laws of Sierra Leone rape in marriage is not an offence and traditionally, a husband may resort to force should the wife refuse. In Port Look, a husband who beat his wife to death for resisting his sexual overtures was acquitted of murder because the medical doctor who certified her death died before the trial. He was set free despite the existence of the death certificate and his confession that he had assaulted his wife for refusing to have sex.

31. FGM remains rampant and continues to be seen as enhancing fertility and as a necessary process for womanhood. Although community-based organizations are beginning to tackle the issue and raise awareness about its dangers, their activities are low key and hampered by lack of resources and capacity. There is a need to develop a systematic approach to this menace through enhanced public education and by establishing sanctuaries for girls who flee from such abusive practices. It is imperative that the Government take action by enacting necessary statutory instruments to outlaw FGM and other harmful practices.

32. UNAMSIL, through its Personnel Conduct Committee continues to receive allegations that peacekeepers are involved in sexual exploitation and abuse. Currently the mission is investigating the case of a 19-year-old woman who was allegedly assaulted and killed by United Nations peacekeepers in April 2004.

33. Another major problem is the statutory discrimination against women in land ownership and inheritance. In a submission to the poverty reduction strategy paper

(PRSP) for Sierra Leone, the Women's Forum, a network of women's organizations, pointed out that lack of justice and poor awareness of women's rights coupled with the Government's failure to incorporate the provisions of the Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into domestic law had resulted in inequality. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, however, is continuing to work with the Law Reform Commission to ensure that all discriminatory laws against women are reviewed and brought into line with the Convention. It is also seeking resources to enable the drafting of its initial report on the Convention, which Sierra Leone ratified by in 1988.

34. Since the emergence of the first female presidential candidate in the last presidential elections, the involvement of women in national politics has continued to increase. A total of 107 women contested the last local government elections held in May 2004. Of these 54 were successful, covering all districts except Koinadugu. Two of the successful female candidates contested as independents. At a post-election review workshop the female candidates identified intimidation by traditional rulers, gender-blind mechanisms of selection by political parties, traditional attitudes, illiteracy, apathy by women and lack of civic education as some of the barriers they faced.

F. Refugees, internees and internally displaced persons

35. The repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees from neighbouring countries has almost come to an end thanks to the successful returnee programme implemented by the United Nations in the aftermath of the war. In the last three years over 250,000 refugees have been assisted to return to Sierra Leone by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and have been resettled in their places of origin. In Kono district alone UNHCR has reportedly returned 34,259 refugees (11,121 families). The majority of these returnees are assisted with food, clothing, farming tools and seeds to restart a normal life.

36. Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone are housed in camps in some districts and provided with basic care by UNHCR pending repatriation. Among these districts are Moyamba, which has approximately 6,700 refugees, and Kenema, with about 13,818 refugees.

37. Liberian fighters crossing into Sierra Leone were usually disarmed and interned in Mapeh camp (Port Loko district). The camp currently accommodates 338 adult ex-fighters, among them three women. A task force comprising representatives of the armed forces, the police, the Prison Service, NaCSA and the International Committee of the Red Cross has been established to run the camp. The task force, however, has limited resources and currently is struggling to provide health care. Several internees suffer from illnesses such as hernias that require surgery and two internees have died this year as a result of illness. WFP provides the necessary food rations. It is imperative to provide all necessary support to the task force in order to ensure the effective operations of the camp.

38. Internally displaced persons in Sierra Leone have generally returned to their areas of origin or have voluntarily decided to settle in other areas. All formerly deserted towns and villages throughout the country have been repopulated and returnees have duly repossessed their houses and land.

G. Economic, social and cultural rights

39. Sierra Leone is considered as potentially one of the richest countries in the world. However, for more than a decade, the country has been ranked as the least developed nation in the UNDP Human Development Index. This contradiction should raise fundamental questions and shock every conscience. How can citizens of such a potentially rich nation live in abject poverty?

40. Progress in the implementation of civil and political rights in post-conflict Sierra Leone has not been matched by advances in the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. This is due to several factors ranging from low levels of private investment, corruption and mismanagement to the dearth of effective leadership by the Government on economic, social and cultural issues. This situation has compromised the full enjoyment of all rights guaranteed under international and domestic laws and accounts for, among other things, the generally poor standard of health across the country, the low literacy rate, high maternal and infant mortality rates, poor housing conditions, high unemployment rates and an abysmally low standard of living.

41. Shortcomings in resources have also impacted negatively upon and compromised the functions of vital institutions of government, such as the judiciary, as exemplified by the lack of an adequate number of judges and magistrates, logistics and detention facilities; in addition, personnel are poorly trained. Only the Government of Sierra Leone can assume responsibility for this situation and strive for change. In this regard, we must not underestimate the need for international assistance and cooperation for the post-conflict economic and social development of the country.

42. The implementation of certain economic, social and cultural rights in Sierra Leone do not require resources but only political will and appropriate direction by the Government. For instance, the discriminatory culturally based practices that deny women their economic rights, including the rights of inheritance and ownership of land, could be addressed by the statutory empowerment of women. The improvements that have been witnessed in the participation of women in the Government and in political affairs could well provide the impetus for much-needed social re-engineering. Currently, women constitute about 8 per cent of the public service and 20 per cent of parliamentarians.

43. Rising inflation has led to an upsurge in the prices of basic commodities and foodstuffs, putting them beyond the reach of many citizens. The salaries of public officers are not commensurate with the reasonable expectations of income for a normal life in the country. As a result, many citizens find themselves under severe economic pressure. Basic local products, such as rice and palm oil, which constitute the staple food, are overpriced, with harmful consequences for the economic well-being of the people. There is an urgent need for the sustainable progressive implementation of economic, social and cultural rights through the initiation by the Government of measures to reduce the rate of inflation and create jobs. Such efforts would serve not only to enhance the standard of living of the people of Sierra Leone, but also as the best preventive measure against a return to war.

III. Human rights activities of the United Nations in Sierra Leone

A. UNAMSIL Human Rights Section

44. The UNAMSIL Human Rights Section provides capacity to the mission in implementing its human rights mandate. In this regard, it is engaged in monitoring and reporting, capacity-building and training, and advocacy and sensitization, with a view to promoting and improving respect for human rights and the restoration of a culture of peace and rule of law in Sierra Leone. With the impending conclusion of UNAMSIL, the Section works closely with national human rights NGOs and civil society groups to ensure that their capacities are properly developed to respond to the human rights needs of Sierra Leone after UNAMSIL.

45. During the reporting period, the Section monitored and reported on violations of human rights committed by State and non-State actors. Its monitoring mandate was carried out by frequent unannounced visits to police stations, prisons and court trials, as well as to the remand home and approved school for children located in Freetown.

46. The Section continues to work very closely with other substantive sections of UNAMSIL such as the Civil Affairs and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) sections. It has maintained an active role in the design and approval process of Quick Impact Projects, which serve to foster community development, information sharing and advocacy. In collaboration with DDR, UNDP and NaCSA, the Human Rights Section identifies and seeks funding for suitable micro projects in Freetown and the districts. It also ensures appropriate coordination between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva and UNDP-Sierra Leone in the implementation of the OHCHR-funded Assisting Communities Together (ACT) project. The DDR-managed trust fund and the ACT project support various activities and programmes in human rights monitoring and reporting, training and capacity-building, gender, and sensitization campaigns.

B. Activities in the districts

47. The Section has expanded its presence in the field by recruiting and deploying three new officers to Freetown, Tonkolili and Kambia, respectively. Four additional national human rights officers have been hired to support and assist international human rights officers in Makeni, Kabala, Kenema and Koidu and plans are under way to recruit and assign another set of nationals for field offices in Freetown, Port Loko, Tonkolili, Moyamba, Bo (Pujehun) and Kambia.

48. Human rights field officers and assistants continue to undertake monitoring, training and capacity-building, advocacy and sensitization functions with a view to advancing communities' knowledge and awareness of basic human rights and women's and children's rights. Several awareness-raising and capacity-building activities have been conducted by the Section for personnel of several human rights NGOs, human rights defenders, the police, court personnel, market women, etc. These efforts are complemented by the establishment of human rights reference libraries in the districts.

C. Monitoring of courts, prisons and police stations

49. Human rights officers monitoring the courts continue to report inadequacies, which adversely impact the effective and efficient delivery of justice. Access to the judicial system is hampered by poverty and illiteracy. The courts are poorly staffed and courtrooms are poorly equipped. The most recurrent problem is an insufficient number of judges, magistrates, prosecutors, Justices of the Peace, bailiffs and clerks. The result is a huge backlog of cases and delays in the administration of justice, which restricts the right of citizens to a fair hearing. This situation is further complicated by the absence of a public defender system for those who cannot afford to retain private counsel. Several districts continue to be without resident magistrates. The shortage of magistrates is so dramatic that districts such as Tonkolili, Bombali, Koinadugu and Kono are covered by a single itinerant magistrate who holds three court session days a week in each of the districts. Even superior courts operate a circuit system. In Port Loko, for example, the high court convenes once every eight months for a maximum of five days. Persons accused of serious offences and who had their cases adjourned end up waiting in jail for another cycle of eight months until the next high court session.

50. In response to the acute shortage of judicial officers, UNDP and the Office of the Chief Justice has designed a four-year technical assistance project aimed at providing salaries and other benefits to 12-15 additional trial magistrates, who will be deployed to the districts from the autumn of 2004. Upon the conclusion of the project the Government will progressively take over the responsibility of paying the salaries of the selected judicial officers. The Anti-Corruption Commission has also provided support by occasionally providing three senior judges to support the courts.

51. To address delays in the administration of justice, the Human Rights Section has requested the Chief Justice to issue practice directives that call for respect for due process of the law. For example, in granting a request for an adjournment, the judge must set a time at the end of which some action must occur, for example the resumption of the proceedings.

52. The overall assessment of district prisons and the Pademba Road Maximum Security Prison in Freetown is mixed. Some district prisons, such as the Port Loko and Kabala prisons, are relatively clean and not overcrowded. Further, there have been few reports of maltreatment of prisoners by wardens in the district prisons. However, other district prisons, such as Moyamba and Makeni, do not have toilet, sanitation or medical facilities, while still others lack special units for the incarceration of juveniles and women. In addition, they do not have electricity and pipe-borne water supply, recreation or educational facilities. Government sources blame insufficient financial and other resources for this situation.

53. There is an urgent need to address understaffing and overcrowding in prisons and to reorientate the penitentiary institutions towards rehabilitative and reformative functions. The high number of detainees without financial means to retain counsel underlines the importance of the Government's providing a legal aid system. Frequent adjournments of cases — some as many as twenty times — should be discouraged. The practice of imprisoning lactating mothers with their children should also be addressed as a matter of urgency.

54. Despite inadequacies in terms of logistics, relevant training and poor salaries, there have been considerable improvements in the conduct of the police, especially as it relates to arrest, detention and interrogations. This improvement has been tempered by complaints of police corruption, unprofessional and violent practices, lack of proper record-keeping, detentions beyond the periods provided by law and poor conditions in police holding cells.

55. The absence of magistrates often encourages the seeking of out-of-court settlement. While this may be practical, it has the potential to encourage disregard for court system, condone impunity and compromise the integrity of courts.

D. Training

56. In conformity with the UNAMSIL exit strategy to empower locals and gradually hand over all responsibilities by closure of the Mission, the Human Rights Section continues to multiply its efforts to prioritize the training of representatives of civil society groups as well as government institutions. These institutions include the Sierra Leone Police and senior officers of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. Other officials, such as magistrates and Justices of the Peace, are often invited to routine seminars held with NGOs. On occasion the Section has conducted in-house human rights training for UNAMSIL peacekeepers, military observers and United Nations Civilian Police. It has also provided induction training in human rights for new civilian staff members.

57. Training activities by the Human Rights Sections have been complemented by regular awareness-raising and sensitization campaigns through weekly radio programmes aired on Radio UNAMSIL, as well as on other local radio stations. Community sensitization programmes on the radio usually cover human rights issues ranging from the meaning and scope of human rights, the role of government institutions, including the police, in the promotion and protection of human rights, women's rights and monitoring economic, social and cultural rights as well as the rights of the child.

58. In line with Security Council resolution 1400 (2002) women are generally well represented in the training programmes and do take part in related activities. Throughout the training sessions, the Human Rights Section applies gender mainstreaming by addressing issues of relevance to the community such as sexual assault and sexual exploitation, women's inheritance rights, domestic violence, child labour and the importance of girl-child education.

E. Capacity-building, technical cooperation and advocacy

59. In order to build national capacity in human rights monitoring, human rights officers usually conducted joint monitoring exercises with local groups from police stations, prisons and the courts. As national groups develop their skills in monitoring they are gradually encouraged to conduct such exercises alone, using guidelines provided by the Human Rights Section. The reports on these activities are usually shared with the Human Rights Section.

60. To strengthen the process of building national capacity through training the Human Rights Section has adopted a structure, resource and train strategy. Through this, civil society groups are assisted to structure themselves into viable and

dynamic coalitions, resourced through the establishment of human rights reference libraries, and trained. During the reporting period the Human Rights Section commissioned a human rights reference library in the northern town of Lungi in Port Loko district. This was the fifth library to be opened in the last two years.

61. The Human Rights Section also supports the human rights clinics established in the Fourabay College and Port Loko Teachers' College. It has also assisted the creation of human rights clubs in schools in Koinadugu district. Plans are under way to establish similar clubs throughout the country.

62. In order to facilitate the exchange of information and ideas, UNAMSIL hosts a monthly meeting of the steering committee composed of human rights NGOs based in Freetown and representatives of international NGOs. The meeting is chaired by the National Forum for Human Rights, which is the umbrella group of national human rights NGOs. Within this forum, the Human Rights Section plays an advisory role, providing training and guidance to the national groups.

63. In the area of technical cooperation, the Human Rights Section sits in on meetings of the United Nations Country Team to exchange information and discuss new developments, policies and strategies. The Country Team has set up a Human Rights Working Group and has appointed the Head of the Human Rights Section as the Chairman. It has the responsibility to reflect on specific key human rights concerns and make recommendations for the implementation of human rights projects. In the same spirit of inter-agency cooperation, the Human Rights Section is working closely at the district level with WFP on assistance in implementing the right to food.

64. The Human Rights Section also oversees the implementation by local partners of projects under ACT project funded by OHCHR. Under the project small grants are provided to grass-roots human rights groups to implement specific activities to promote and protect human rights. These activities are also complemented by the funding of human rights promotion activities, mostly in the area of sensitization and advocacy, by UNAMSIL DDR. The implementation of these activities through local groups has strengthened them as viable partners and supported the extension of human rights advocacy nationwide. This was aptly demonstrated by the successful collaboration with local NGOs in the celebration of the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda.

F. National Human Rights Commission

65. On 30 July 2004, Parliament passed legislation establishing the National Human Rights Commission for Sierra Leone. The legislation provides a framework for the establishment and development of an independent and effective national human rights commission in line with the Paris Principles. It was the outcome of collaboration between OHCHR, UNAMSIL and the Government of Sierra Leone and represented the culmination of work that started with the visit to Sierra Leone in late 1999 of the High Commissioner's Special Adviser on National Institutions. During the coming months, OHCHR will design a technical cooperation project to support the Commission within the context of the follow-up to TRC.

IV. Transitional justice

A. Truth and Reconciliation Commission

66. During the reporting period, TRC, established in July 2002, completed its public activities. In March the commissioners met in Freetown and adopted the final report of the Commission. The report is currently being printed and is scheduled to be presented to the President in September 2004.

67. OHCHR has already received funding to provide logistical and technical support for the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission. The relevant technical cooperation project will be designed once the report of the Commission is made public and will support the Follow-up Committee provided for in the TRC Act (2000).

B. Special Court for Sierra Leone

68. The Special Court for Sierra Leone was created jointly by the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations to prosecute persons bearing "the greatest responsibility" for serious violations of international humanitarian law and certain crimes under national law perpetrated in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996, including those leaders who, in committing such crimes, have threatened the establishment and implementation of the peace process in Sierra Leone.

69. In May 2004, the Trial Chamber of the Court, in a majority decision, approved a motion by prosecutors to add the new count of "forced marriage" to indictments against six defenders reported to have been leaders of the former Armed Forces Revolutionary Council and the Revolutionary United Front. The new count, within in the category of "sexual violence", marks the first time that forced marriage will be prosecuted as a crime against humanity under international law.

70. Since the start of the year, the Court has focused on adopting fundamental legal documents to facilitate trials and the commencement and continuation of hearings by the Trial Chambers on varied complex legal issues, including the involvement of child soldiers. During the period, the Court decided to hold three joint trials, joining the indicted according to their wartime allegiances, rather than nine separate trials of the nine indictees in the custody of the Special Court.

71. On 3 June 2004, the Trial Chamber commenced trials of the Civil Defence Forces group of indictees (Samuel Hinga Norman, Moinina Fofanah and Allieu Kondewa), followed in July with that of former leaders of RUF (General Issah Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao). The court rejected a legal challenge of its jurisdiction by Hinga Norman and Augustine Gbao.

72. During the visit of a Security Council delegation to Sierra Leone in June 2004, references were made to the extradition by Nigeria of the former President of Liberia, Charles Taylor, who had been indicted by the Court in 2003. The prosecutor has publicly stated that the Court could disallow a Head of State being protected by diplomatic immunity against prosecution for international crimes and refuse amnesties, which are not applicable to crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law.

73. The Government of Sierra Leone and civil society continue to give the Court adequate support to enable it to meet its targeted objective — to restore the rule of law and to contribute to the process of national reconciliation and the maintenance of peace.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

74. There have been significant improvements in the area of civil and political rights during the seven years of the United Nations presence in Sierra Leone, despite a weak national human rights protection system. In order to secure the gains of the peace process, it is imperative to provide real economic opportunities for the people and to provide viable and effective national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. The conclusion of the TRC during the reporting period is an important landmark in the evolution of Sierra Leone in the post-conflict era. The major challenge will be in implementing the recommendations of the Commission. The international community should spare no effort in supporting the Government of Sierra Leone in implementing the recommendations in order to provide the much-needed foundation for reconciliation and healing. The human rights component of the proposed residual post-UNAMSIL United Nations presence in Sierra Leone could be an effective tool for ensuring continuing international attention to the human rights needs of Sierra Leone.

75. There is a need for continuous capacity-building for local human rights NGOs. Greater international assistance is required to support the work of local NGOs as the United Nations gradually prepares to leave Sierra Leone. A good number of these NGOs continue to encounter financial and other constraints, which impact negatively on their efficiency and effectiveness.

76. OHCHR commits itself to undertaking follow-up actions and advocacy activities at the highest level with the Government of Sierra Leone to address chronic and rampant human rights issues such as the poor functioning of the justice system, the issue of trial without legal representation, the failure of the Government to submit reports to treaty bodies and the failure to harmonize domestic laws with the provisions of international human rights instruments to which Sierra Leone is a party.

77. Equally important is the need to support the work of the Government in the review of the status of women in Sierra Leone. The Law Reform Commission has taken some very good initiatives towards greater protection and promotion of women's rights. However, this initiative can only be sustained by funding, capacity-building and technical assistance from the international community.